

## Editorial Department.

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### LOCATION AND MANAGEMENT OF HOSPITALS FOR THE INSANE.

IN Volume X. of this JOURNAL allusion was made to the fact that hospitals for the insane are regarded as local improvements, and used to build up small towns. The following from the current dailies shows that this practice still continues. A new hospital for the insane was needed in Iowa: "The Governor originally appointed J. D. M. Hamilton of Fort Madison, George W. Bemis of Independence, and Dr. Kulp of Davenport, Commissioners to locate the new insane asylum provided for by the last Legislature. Atlantic and Clarinda are the chief contestants for the prize, and a sharp rivalry has developed. The Hon. Lafayette Young, acting for Atlantic, filed a protest against the commissioning of Kulp, stating in an affidavit that he "had distinctly pledged himself to Clarinda." Kulp filed a counter-affidavit declaring the statement false, and alleging that Young endeavored to influence him by offers of the support of a leading newspaper in any political aspirations he might entertain, to make him treasurer of the institution, and to do sundry other things for his benefit. After hearing the case the Governor concluded not to commission Kulp, and thereupon appointed ex-Senator E. J. Hartshorn of Palo Alto County. The row is very unfortunate, and the friends of Dr. Kulp say it is not ended yet." It is obvious that so long as there is not some central authority like the State Boards of Charities charged with the location and supervision of hospitals for the insane in lieu of local boards of trustees and

irresponsible commissioners, so long will scandals like that mentioned in the present citation occur.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CRIMES OF "HARMLESS" LUNATICS.

THE ideas of some medical superintendents of insane hospitals as to what constitutes a harmless lunatic are decidedly vague. Even from hospitals for the insane epileptics, hallucinated lunatics, and delusional paranoiacs are discharged as harmless.

A lunatic, for example, escaped from a Western hospital for the insane, "who was undoubtedly insane, though seemingly in the full possession of his intellectual faculties. His insanity showed itself mainly in three ways : first, a delusion that he was the possessor of a great property ; second, a mania for writing love-letters and offering himself in marriage to all sorts and conditions of females ; and, third, becoming blasphemously abusive and dangerously violent on the smallest fancied provocation. He wrote bushels of letters, but his correspondence with females was finally checked, owing to complaints, as the letters were, as a rule, of a most obscene character, and most of them were addressed to women whom he had never seen, but whose acquaintance had been made through personals in newspapers. He had proposed marriage in all cases, and in some had been accepted, the filthy writing notwithstanding. In one addressed to a woman he said he was the father of seventeen children and was in a hurry to be father of more. This woman had sent him her photograph. None of his letters to women were fit for publication. He imagined every one was trying to rob him, and would begin suit on the most trivial cause if he could get an attorney to take the case. Despite the clearly indicated delusions of a character likely to lead to results disastrous to society, very little effort had been made to recapture him, as according to the superintendent he was not dangerous except where he fancied wrong was being done him." This man sued out a writ of habeas corpus, and the superintendent, without letting the question come to an issue, thereupon discharged him.

Concerning this class of cases Dr. Godding says : " But they say